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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 004379

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PHUM PGOV PINR IZ

SUBJECT: MOI IG CLAIMS HIGH LEVEL RESISTENCE TO IG EFFORTS;
SOME IMPROVEMENT

Classified By: POLCOUNS ROBERT S. FORD FOR REASONS 1.4 (B)
AND (D).

1. (C) SUMMARY: Ministry of Interior (MoI) Inspector General (IG) Nori Al-Nori told PolOff on October 18 that there is some improvement in the human rights situation within MoI, but there is resistance at the highest levels to IG efforts in fighting abuse and corruption. Steps have been taken to reduce corruption and abuse, to include the conduct of many investigations and punishment of some officials found guilty of malfeasance. A group of IGs from various ministries is trying to establish a task force to monitor detention facilities and prisons, which is also a mandate of the Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR). We have yet to see results of any of the investigations conducted by the IG and his focus continues to be on corruption. Al-Nori requested additional training and regular meetings with PolOff. U.S. advisors will continue to work closely with him to address human rights and corruption issues, as well as to identify training opportunities. END SUMMARY.

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

2. (C) MoI IG Nori Al-Nori told PolOff on October 18 that, although there is some improvement in the human rights situation within MoI, there is resistance at the highest levels to IG efforts in fighting abuse and corruption. He noted that much of the resistance is coming from the officers commanding the various units. As a result, said Al-Nori, corruption and human rights abuses continue despite steps taken to reduce them.

3. (C) These steps include a hotline installed to respond to the public's complaints and concerns, the conduct of many investigations, and punishment of some police officials for malfeasance. Al-Nori said that, in the last four months, the IG has opened more than 650 investigations; however, most of these cases relate to corruption. (NOTE: In addition to providing education on standards of conduct, the Multi-National Security Transition Command- Iraq has embedded Special Police Transition Teams and Police Transition Teams, which provide Coalition mentorship and monitoring to ensure operations are conducted in accordance with acceptable standards. Discrepancies are reported and tracked accordingly. END NOTE.)

JOINT TASK FORCE PROPOSAL BY IG'S

4. (C) Additionally, IGs from the Ministries of Defense, Human Rights, and Justice -- among others -- have begun to collaborate, developing a strategy to establish standards and coordinate their efforts. The group plans to approach the Minister of Interior with a request that he allow a joint task force comprising IG staff from various ministries to inspect MoI detention facilities. (NOTE: There is currently a section within the Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) that is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the conditions of detention facilities and prisons. Deputy Minister of Human Rights Aida Osairan told PolOff on October 24 that she opposes the implementation of this task force because it would undermine the efforts of MoHR. She also said that MoHR's IG, who some describe as anti-Coalition, told her that the task force was his idea. Osairan said that Acting Minister of Human Rights Narmin Othman supports the idea. END NOTE.)

5. (C) Al-Nori agreed to provide PolOff with statistics regarding corruption and abuse cases, as well as their status and disposition. Al-Nori emphasized the need to empower the IG system, noting that without independence (including a separate budget) the IGs in all ministries would continue to struggle. Al-Nori, who requested to meet with PolOff on a weekly basis, asked for technical assistance to help strengthen MoI's human rights efforts. He also asked for help in identifying training and exchange opportunities to build up the Directorate's capacity.

COMMENT

16. (C) Al-Nori is considered by many to be a leader in efforts to strengthen the IG system and protect its independence. (NOTE: There are, however, conflicting reports about Al-Nori's integrity. END NOTE.) The fact remains that we have seen no concrete results of investigations into human rights abuses. His focus appears to be primarily corruption. In fact, Al-Nori clearly did not want to discuss the persistent allegations of human rights abuses by police forces and even got quite defensive when PolOff pressed him on the fact that it appears police are committing these abuses with impunity. Al-Nori eventually ventured to say that he has safety concerns for himself and his staff and offered to provide PolOff with a complete list of investigations of human rights abuses. It remains to be seen whether security concerns are driving his reluctance to engage on human rights abuse issues or some other factor. Post will continue to work with Al-Nori (U.S. advisors regularly liaise with him) and his staff to address human rights and corruption within MoI, as well as to try to help support the training of his 1500 persons office of Inspector General. END COMMENT.

Satterfield